

## Miller, Kristina

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**From:** Haag, Daniel  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 27, 2019 10:23 PM  
**To:** Kondreck, Robert; Zintak, Leonard; R5 ER Notification List  
**Cc:** Miller, Kristina; Maritote, John; Mendoza, Ramon  
**Subject:** R5 ER Notification #3 - Camras School Mercury Spill, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

### **Region 5 ER Notification #3:** Camras School Mercury Spill, Chicago, Illinois (NRC Report #1241158)

**Report as of:** 2215 hrs CST, March 27, 2019

**Overview:** Students were discovered handling mercury by Chicago Public School District (CPS) staff at Camras Elementary School located at 3000 N. Mango St in Chicago, Illinois on March 26, 2019. A broken barometer was the source of the unknown amount of mercury. CPS staff discovered the students handling the mercury and contacted the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Chicago Fire Department (CFD) for assistance in evaluating the threat. CPS, CDPH, and CFD determined the students involved in the handling of the mercury, assessed where the mercury could be tracked, and performed targeted screening prior to students leaving for the day. Elevated mercury levels were discovered in various parts of the building during the initial assessment.

On March 27, 2019, CPS temporarily closed Camras School and exercised their contingency plan where students would attend classes at nearby schools. CPS has hired a cleanup contractor to recover mercury beads and remove any residual mercury that was tracked in the school.

**State, Local, and other Federal Agency Action:** CDPH and CFD initially responded to the mercury spill. Illinois EPA was informed of the mercury spill. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) was contacted for technical assistance and has consulted with CDPH on clearance levels for the school classrooms as well as the students' personal belongings.

**EPA Actions:** OSC Kristina Miller responded with two Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) contractors around 2100 hrs on March 26, 2019 to provide technical assistance and assess various parts of the School. Elevated readings were discovered in multiple classrooms and common spaces. CDPH and CPS were notified of these areas.

On March 27, 2019, EPA deployed two OSCs and four START contractors to continue to assist CDPH and CPS in determining the extent of the mercury contamination. EPA is currently assisting CDPH and CPS to determine if mercury has migrated off-site. CPS staff identified 26 students who may have come in contact with elemental mercury. EPA and START conducted screening of those students' personal belongings (backpacks, shoes, and clothing) for mercury vapor. Personal belongings of four students were found to have elevated mercury vapor readings of greater than 10,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup>, and an additional 11 students had personal belonging with mercury vapor readings between 1,000 – 7,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup>. CDPH prioritized the residences of these students for additional screening and asked for EPA assistance in conducting the screenings. The residences of three of the four students whose personal belongings were found to have mercury vapor greater than 10,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup> were evaluated. None were found to have mercury vapor readings requiring additional remediation; however, additional personal belongings were removed from two of the residences, as they were found to have mercury vapor readings greater than 10,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup>. Residential screenings for the remaining 12 students will continue on

March 28, 2019 as prioritized by CDPH. Personal vehicles of two Camras Elementary School staff members were also screened and were found to have no elevated mercury vapor readings.

CPS has hired a cleanup contractor to conduct remediation of any affected classrooms/areas of the school. Cleanup operations are underway and are anticipated to continue through the weekend. CPS has requested EPA's continued technical assistance as well as support with post-remediation confirmation/clearance sampling. At present four classrooms and the cafeteria have mercury vapor concentrations greater than 1,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup>. The CPS contractor is prioritizing cleanup of classrooms where elemental mercury is present. CPS will continue to have Camras Elementary School closed tomorrow, March 28<sup>th</sup>. A conference call is scheduled for mid-day tomorrow to evaluate whether the school will be partially reopened on Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup>.

Future updates will be provided via PolRep.

**Media Interest:** <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-mercury-spill-elementary-school-20190327-story.html>

**EPA Region 5 OSC contacts:**

Kristina Miller, 312-237-5685

Dan Haag, 312-886-6906

Ramon Mendoza, 312-802-1409